

road, has been constructed at the cost of the Duc de Choiseul, by the French engineer, M. Cugnot, in 1770. It is moreover asserted, that this machine was put to work at the Arsenal of Paris, and acquired such an impetus, that it had run down one of the walls of that establishment. As the conservator of the above collection, Colonel Morin is preparing the catalogue: he has found several documents, interesting for elucidating the history of steam power in France: one of these documents states that it was a Swiss officer, M. Planta, who first submitted the discovery to Choiseul. At any rate, a practical experiment on steam power is thus vindicated for France, and the press of that country are of opinion, that if the nation had not been taken up by wars and revolutions, it would have been on French roads that steam would have been first put in action.

RAILWAY JOTTINGS.

THE electric light has been tried at the station of the London and North-Western Railway at Lime-street, Liverpool. The other lights were all put out, and a small electric machine is said to have sufficiently illuminated the whole station.—The plant of the Great Northern is said to be at length definitively fixed to be at Doncaster. Plans for the extensive buildings in connection with it are to be out immediately. At least 500 men and 200 boys will be employed in the plant. This same plant was promised to the citizens of Lincoln, it appears, as an inducement for them to support the Great Northern in preference to the Cambridge and Lincoln line.—On Whit Monday, at the Euston-square terminus, there were as many as twenty excursionist trains: from the various towns and largely-populated districts on the main and branch lines from Oxford, Northampton, Rugby, Birmingham, Wolverhampton, Manchester, and Liverpool. The fare for a third class with a return ticket from Liverpool was 20s., considerably more than single fare, as usual in so many excursions by rail. The fares on shorter trips were proportionate. On the Great Western the Exhibition trains were well filled. Early in the day a heavy one arrived from Bristol and Bath, the passengers being charged but 6s. for the double journey. The Great Northern brought up a fair portion of visitors from Yorkshire and more northern districts, London being reached from York with a return ticket for 15s. 6d. third class. By the Eastern Counties line, trains from Colchester, Peterborough, Ely, Norwich, and Yarmouth, brought several thousands to the metropolis. The inhabitants of Dover, Ramsgate, and other towns reached by the South-Eastern line.—Since the introduction of railways, an influx of visitors such as that from this last whitsuntide was never witnessed, although it is evident that the fear of a still greater influx prevented the rush of thousands more, who will spread their excursion visits over the course of the whole summer, in a leisurely but continuous stream, turned off or on just as the directing turncocks who fix excursion fares put on the screw, more or less, in the vain hope of increased benefit by a diminished stream, or in the hope, less vain, of increased benefit by a contrary process.—The facilities for travelling offered at this season by the Eastern Counties Company, in the way of special trains and return tickets, may be gathered from the fact that third-class return-tickets, at Parliamentary fares, are issued by every Saturday evening's mail-train from London, available for the return journey by the up-mail on Sunday night, or the first train on Monday morning; that first and second-class return-tickets to London are available by any train up to the Saturday night following the day of issue; special trains every Monday morning (at very low fares), due in London about noon, tickets available for the return journey by 7 a. m. train any day up to and including the following Sunday; special trains provided for clubs guaranteeing 250 passengers; first and second class return-tickets for London, available for the down mail-train only of the same day, issued

on Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays, at reduced rates; tickets for Yarmouth and Lowestoft issued at single fare every Friday, Saturday, and Sunday, available for return journey by any train up to and including the following Thursday. The foregoing are exclusive of various arrangements on the local branches, and also of the excursion train to Cambridge every Sunday.

ENGLISH AND FOREIGN FURNITURE. IN THE EXHIBITION.

THE *Times*, of last week, in taking a survey of the furniture department in the Crystal Palace, and drawing a comparison between Foreign and British articles, with a kind parental feeling advises our upholsterers to study the productions of the former, because of their superior artistic and utilitarian qualities. Now, as this advice is, no doubt, meant as much for the artist whom the manufacturer employs, as the manufacturer, and, as I am somewhat connected with them, I am very anxious to profit by these very good-natured suggestions; for I need not tell you that artists have never done studying, and that therefore I am very willing to learn. But it happens that the *Times* directly afterwards, and in its usual masterly style, cuts the Austrian furniture all to pieces—the bed never could be slept in, the chairs are almost immovable, and under the tables it would be impossible to smuggle one's legs; the bookcase is a cathedral in miniature; and thus severely criticising these contributions, unfortunately concludes without giving our countrymen the slightest idea where to direct their eyes, steps to find those excellent studies which the critic considers them to stand so much in need of. Under these circumstances I address myself to you as an acknowledged friend to the manufacturer and artist, if possible to assist them. The Austrian furniture having been, when the Exhibition first opened, set down as the very best thing the Continent contributed, but proving now, according to the *Times*, unworthy of imitation, leaves nothing but the specimens from other states as worthy examples—so one must naturally conclude;—but as the lion of the exposition has turned out such a distorted creature, what can be expected from the remaining feline tribe?—nothing at all! With the exception of the sideboard from Paris, to hold which, in this country, it would be necessary to build a house expressly, and which does not at all agree with utilitarian principles, although in other respects a most creditable production; or, with the exception of some cabinets, with exceedingly minute detail, and with exquisite ivory carvings, and one or two things from Russia, there is not a foreign article of the description in question that could give our upholsterers a single new idea, or help to raise the mind of the artist or artisan employed by them. It is a fact of which the public at large is becoming daily more sensible, that the British furniture department is infinitely more elegant than the foreign. The English are full a generation in advance of the German States, as far as elegance, variety of design, and regard for the great principle which enjoins the greatest possible effect with the least possible labour is concerned. It is true that we have our share of monstrosities conjointly with the Prussians, the Wurtenbergers, and the Swiss, for which it is impossible to apologize; but, upon the whole, the English upholsterers have made extraordinary advances within these twenty or thirty years, which the present Exposition is calculated to prove to all those who can remember the character of household furniture of a previous time. Stove-makers come out well, too, and will soon be equal to the French in whatever these may yet be superior.

No other party having taken up the subject, which is really a serious one, considering the quantity of household furniture brought over and sold to the nobility and gentry, I have reluctantly clutched the gauntlet; but, sir, it is scarcely, earnestly speaking, a question for an artist; for, in most instances, manufacturers derive their designs from carvers, working cabinet makers, ditto upholsterers, ditto chair-

makers, and from all sorts of persons who have dabbled in drawing; or when the educated artist is employed he has the mortification of having his design murdered by injudicious alterations, through a disregard of his superintendence—or in consequence of the lowest estimate for executing the parts determining the workman, regardless of requisite abilities. Better times, I trust, are coming, to which the Grand Exhibition of the Industry of all Nations will not a little conduce—but we must wait a little longer. Aesthetic education must make itself felt with the master, as it will certainly do with the working man.

H. WHITAKER.

ANOTHER VIEW OF COMPETITIONS.

THINKING that some things, though very distressing, ought to be discussed, a professional man who attended at the meeting in Lyon's Inn Hall would be glad to know why competition for Architecture and Sculpture should be good and right, but not even be thought of for Divinity, Law, Medicine, and hardly ever in Music, Painting, or Literature. Taking the view that it is a system destructive to the practitioner in a pecuniary point of view, it is no doubt patriotic in him to respond to invitations for public works; but this observation does not answer the question quite avoided by the meeting, which seemed to consider that competing was an "acted fact," and beyond recall; and that it had only to settle the best mode of regulating it.

But this is contrary to reason, which is supposed, when evil effects are perceived, to ascend to their cause, to determine if it be right or wrong, and, if right, to point out how and in what manner it fails to produce proper results. Admitting, however, that competing may be a duty (which the writer wishes to have shown to himself and to the public), it does not follow that the present mode of competition is right: it is agreed to be a very bad one; and it is proposed to induce all practitioners to abide by a code of regulations for its improvement. This step is futile, in the writer's opinion, as he knows of two men, of high repute, who are in the habit of declaring that they will hesitate at nothing to secure new connections, and that they despise "professional etiquette." While these men are capable of disregarding the "code of regulations," the writer will not only follow their example, but endeavour to induce his friends to imitate it. Nothing can stop such people but its pecuniary inexpediency, or a sure punishment: no court can be instituted to take cognizance of it; and, as to opinion, the writer begs to ask if those men who have succeeded, by the practices now denounced, are not quite as well, or better received, than their purer and less fortunate brethren: this cannot be denied. The pecuniary inexpediency of such practices can only arise from the wariness and good faith of the committees who act as judges.

Now the questions of the institute, &c. addressed to the committees, are useless: on the one hand, no person out of the profession can draw up a satisfactory programme; no secretary of a committee will take responsibility upon himself: no committee can be brought to account. On the other hand, the chairman's usual professional adviser will have immense advantages, equivalent to extra time for executing the drawings dependant upon a scheme completely fulfilling his master's wants, and matured a week before any other competitor can possibly know those details whose consideration has been equivalent to an active canvas by a man already favourably known.

Supposing the architects to keep the code strictly and honourably, what is to be the guarantee for the justice of the committee? Supposing that a committee, without any reservation, advertises the execution of the work as the first premium, or as the only one, and chooses to say to the lucky competitor, we really do not like to trust you, and will not employ you; there is no remedy for him, and his labour returns to him as trash; for his ideas have been promulgated at a public ex-